



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY

Entered as second-class matter November 18, 1907, at the Post Office, New York, N. Y., under the Act of Congress of March 1, 1879

VOL. VII

NEW YORK, APRIL 4, 1914

No. 22

Some of Professor Schmidt's remarks in his article on the Direct Method in the last number of THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY reminded me of a paper by Professor Nutting in The Classical Journal for February last (9.222-226), entitled Reflections of a Non-Combatant.

Professor Nutting begins by declaring that whether the experiments now being made with the Direct Method of teaching Latin shall prove as successful as some of those using the Method hope and predict, the discussion of the subject seems likely to bring substantial results in its train. He expresses, however, by implication at least, the fear that allegiance to one method or another may divide our forces into opposing camps.

There may be little real danger of such disruption, but enthusiastic advocacy of some one method of teaching very naturally and insidiously runs into depreciation of all others. This point may be illustrated from the recent paper of Mr. Chickering in the *Classical Journal*¹. As a whole, the article is temperate and fair; but, in speaking of the change of method incident to the decay of Latin as a spoken language, Mr. Chickering says: "the whole substance of the prevailing methods [of learning the language] was swept away, and what remained *was believed to have value partly because it was hard, partly because it was disagreeable*"². And elsewhere he speaks of teaching Latin "in the old humdrum fashion"³.

To write in this way, continues Professor Nutting, is to play into the hands of the adversaries of Latin, and in so far to injure the very cause which the writer has at heart. The adversaries of Latin will be only too glad to quote such a statement by a teacher of Latin. "Especially will those be pleased who hold that discipline has no legitimate place in education, and that the proper way to train a child is to study his likes and dislikes, and then gently help him along the line of least resistance".

In this connection it would be well, I think, to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest an article in the Educational Review for February last, by Superintendent William H. Maxwell, of New York City, entitled On a Certain Arrogance in Educational Theorists. I do not believe in imitating the ostrich;

nor do I believe that the inhabitants of a citadel should themselves throw down its walls as soon as the foe sounds his blast (much less before he blows his trumpet). No one interested in the cause of the Classics can truthfully deny there are things, many things that need correction. We need in Latin work as elsewhere (let us never forget the 'elsewhere') more teachers with better minds, with better training, with better knowledge of their subject, with richer personalities—in a word better men and better women, better trained (such men and women are needed in every walk of life); all this and more we can admit without, however, saying, or implying that our cause is hopelessly lost, or that the work of thousands of skillful and devoted persons is hopelessly useless to the world unless some one specific thing is done. When will the champions of a given thing learn that wholesale condemnation of every thing else defeats their propaganda, by irritating others and thereby closing their minds and hearts to the appeal in the behalf of the new or of return to the old?

What we need now is not more talk of a theoretical sort concerning the Direct Method, but use of the Direct Method, and a careful examination of the results of such use. Mere declarations that a given method is a panacea for all our woes, however many or vigorous the declarations may be, have in themselves little, if any, value. We need, as Professor Yocum pointed out some time ago (THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY 7. 105-110) the testimony of actual experience, based on sound educational principles. That testimony must come from many quarters; it must come in ample volume; it must extend over some years; it must be subjected to the severest scrutiny not merely by those who stand ready to adopt the method when its claims are proved, though they do not employ it now, but also of those who are at present distinctly hostile to the Direct Method (if any such there are). The pupils trained by the Direct Method must be subjected to tests, not merely by those who have trained them, but by others; they must endure those tests with success, or else the claims of their teachers will make no deep or lasting impression on others. It will not do for those who advocate a given method to take, in terms or by

¹ IX, 2 (November, 1913), 67 ff.

² P. 70. Italics mine.

³ *Classical Weekly*, VI, 5 (November 2, 1912), 35.

implication, the ground that their declarations and their testimony shall be accepted, as presented, by everyone else. To be unwilling to subject the evidence to scrutiny by the opponents, actual or imagined, of the method is to show, in reality, a lack of faith in the cause championed.

We do not in social or political life admit or ever seriously argue that the only persons that shall be heard on a given proposal are those who champion that proposal: why should we admit it or maintain it in educational matters?

The Direct Method, its advocates maintain, teaches grammar more effectively than other methods do; if this is so, pupils trained by the method should be able to prove their knowledge of Latin grammar, that is, of the actual facts of the Latin language, even to teachers who believe in other methods and via the usual examinations. The Direct Method gives, it is claimed, a more competent knowledge of Latin; its beneficiaries should, therefore, be better able than other pupils to stand any tests or pass any examinations (I am thinking of the end of the preparatory school course) not manifestly absurd and not dictated by malice. They should also be better able than other students to stand the test of work in College. Till, then, the evidence desiderated above is forthcoming, references to the teaching of Latin by 'the old method', 'in the old humdrum fashion' are to be deplored.

I was told not long ago of a meeting in New England at which the Direct Method was vigorously upheld by a Superintendent (whether of town or county or of state Schools I do not now recall). It was suggested that some light might be obtained from a College represented at the meeting which had in its Latin Classes two students who had been prepared by the Direct Method. The Superintendent protested and the College man was not heard. I think that the Superintendent knew or suspected that the evidence from a perfectly honorable witness would in this case be decidedly adverse to the Direct Method, so far as its value was representable by those two students, at least. Would he have protested had he thought the testimony likely to be favorable? One swallow does not make a spring, but so long as the advocates of the Direct Method rely so largely for a justification of their own propaganda on denunciation of the purposes, methods and results gained by other teachers of Latin, they have no moral or intellectual right to object to the appraisement of the results of their own work by others, as rapidly as specimens of that work appear.

Some years ago, I was appointed Chairman of a Committee of The New York Latin Club, which was instructed to consider the subject of First Year Latin, with special reference to the New York City High Schools, with a view to having changes made in the

Latin work of the First Year, if changes seemed desirable. Just after that Committee was appointed, the agitation in this country for the Direct Method began. The Committee has never made a report. Its chairman has been waiting for the time when evidence enough shall have accumulated to make it clear whether the Direct Method will work in practice. I was much interested in Professor Nutting's paper in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* (7:154-157) on Latin in the Seventh and Eighth Grades in California, since I had for many years thought that if the period of infancy of our Latin pupils could be prolonged, if they could have a longer period in which to get the fundamentals of the language—by any method—with far more time for drill in those fundamentals before they attacked the literature, no part of which was ever meant for babes and sucklings, their ultimate progress would be far more rapid and far more extensive than is the case at present, and the mortality among Latin students would be much smaller. Professor Nutting's paper goes far to show, if it does not prove completely by concrete evidence secured through actual trial, that this theory was correct. I had hardly dared to think seriously of the possibility that Latin might be started in the Public Schools earlier than it is at present, but again Professor Nutting's paper shows clearly that such an earlier beginning is not an impossibility. One State has already sanctioned it, in a part of the country some are none too apt to think of as devoted to cultural studies. It might very well be that the beginning of Latin at an earlier period, back in the Grammar Schools, and the use of the Direct Method there, in whole or in part, would help our cause mightily. At the meeting of The Classical Association of the Middle West and South, to be held at Iowa City, on April 9-10, Mr. Wilbert L. Carr, of the University High School, Chicago, is to read a paper on The Desirability of Latin in the Eighth Grade; the outline of the paper, as given in *The Classical Journal* 9:237, indicates that Mr. Carr holds much the same views on this subject as those set forth by Professor Nutting in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7:154-157, on the basis of experience in California. That Mr. Carr, too, is to speak on the basis of experience will be seen by an examination of the quotations from an article by Professor Judd, of the School of Education, University of Chicago, in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 7:9-10, 17-18. It would seem that concerted effort to bring about the introduction of Latin in the Grade Schools might now stand some chance of success. In that case we should come a step, at least, nearer to setting up again those conditions (I mean conditions of early acquaintance with Latin) which played so large a part in those good old days when the Direct Method of studying Latin had, as its present advocates seem to imply, the field to itself.

C. K.